

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MAY 23, 2010

Let us Lift up Our Hearts



PENTECOST SUNDAY/MAY 23

Descent of the Holy Spirit

(One "of the 12 Great Feasts")

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy;
followed by Vespers with Kneeling Prayers;
Coffee Hour with Bake Sale
4:00p.m. General Memorial Service at
Parish Cemetery

MONDAY/MAY 24

Day of the Holy Spirit

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
7:00p.m. Compline & Akathist to Holy Trinity

WEDNESDAY/MAY 26

6:30p.m. Compline

7-8:30p.m. Adult Study Class:

"The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament Prophets"

THURSDAY/MAY 27

7:00p.m. Georgian Service & Class

SATURDAY/MAY 29

Leave-Taking of Pentecost

St. Luke, Archbishop & Surgeon of Crimea

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Luke; Confessions
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/MAY 30

SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS (Tone 8)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour' Question & Answer Period
12:00p.m. to 2:00p.m. Church Doors Open

MONDAY/MAY 31

Memorial Day

Annual Pilgrimage at Monastery of St. Tikhon

And

Beginning of 29 Day Ss. Peter & Paul Lent

Fast-Free Pentecost Week

Wednesday & Friday, May 26 & 28 are
fast free days

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

John Korolovich	May 23, 1925
Wasył Mlinetz	May 23, 1954
Thomas Cimpko	May 23, 1962
Semeon Kozak	May 24, 1941
Julian Sudillo	May 27, 1977
Tatiana Shvidrik	May 27, 1988
Mary Szwhala	May 28, 1970
Elizabeth Bulat	May 29, 1942
Emil Wilhousky	May 29, 1953
Dominick Stokolovsky	May 30, 1939
Anna Kuchner	May 30, 1949
William Marchision	May 30, 1963

Offerings for the week of May 23

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; in memory of Joan; health of Michael (birthday).

Flowers - in memory of Charles.

Door-Keeper Ministry – June Month

Door-Keepers are sought for the Sundays of June between 12:00p.m. to 2:00p.m. Sign-up sheet may be found on the vestibule stand.

Ss. Peter & Paul Lent or the Apostles Fast

This is one of the “four Lenten seasons of the year.” Unlike the other 3 lents, the duration of this fast is dictated by the Feast of Pascha. The earlier the Pascha, the longer the lent. The lent always begins on Monday after the Sunday of All Saints and ends on the feast of the Apostles Peter & Paul. The length of the fast this year of 2010 is 29 days (for those on the old calendar the fast is 42 days – since the feast of Ss. Peter & Paul is July 12).

As always, a fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil products. Your parish wall calendar indicates days when the fast is mitigated and allows for fish, wine or oil.

Those of the faithful that are regular communicants and receive the Holy Gifts every Sunday are reminded to approach Holy Confession in this month of June so as to continue to receive Holy Communion after the time of the Fast (June 29).



On the Calendar

- **Blessing of Graduates/June 13** At the end of the Divine Liturgy a prayer and blessing will be bestowed on those graduating this Spring. Please submit names and schools to Fr. James no later than June 9.
- **Ss. Peter & Paul Lent/May 31-June 28** In planning your June calendar, be mindful of the Lenten season.
- **Adult Study Classes/May 26, June 2, 9, 16** Wednesdays, 7-8:30p.m.
- **June Movie/ June 13 & 15** “The Acts of the Apostles: Chapters 10-19”
- **Ss. Peter & Paul Day/June 29** The Patronal Feast Day of our Parish.
- **Bus Pilgrimage from our Parish/July 10, Saturday.** To the Monastery of St.Tikhon. More information to follow. Reserve the date.
- **Annual Parish Picnic/July 25, Sunday.** At the usual location in New Brunswick.

Namesday Greetings

St. Theodosia/May 29: Tessie Nevitt; Many Blessed Years!

A Sincere Thanks!

To all for the wonderful Concert & Reception held last Sunday. There were some 25 choir members and 115 guests. The singing was heavenly and the foods plentiful and delicious! Again, thanks to everyone who helped out to make this day as special as it was. Check our parish website for photos of the event.

Memory Eternal!

To Richard John Simpson of East Brunswick, NJ. Richard, a former parishioner who reposed on May 16th. Burial was in our parish cemetery.



Pentecost Archpastoral Letter

May 23, 2010

Beloved Concelebrants at the Holy Altar and Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord!
Christ is in our midst!

On this joyous Feast of Holy Pentecost, we as Orthodox Christians re-live the coming down of the Most Holy Spirit and the Birth of our Holy Church. Today we are called to be as faithful to the Holy Spirit as were the apostles and disciples who received Him on Pentecost Sunday nearly 2,000 years ago.

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke provides us with a description of life in the Early Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, one that our parishes should seek to emulate: "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of the Bread and in prayers ... praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved*" (Acts 2:42, 46-47).

Saint Seraphim of Sarov describes for us that the whole purpose of our life as individual Christians as nothing more than receiving the Holy Spirit: "*For the true aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.*" He explains that our fasts, vigils, prayers and almsgiving, and other good works done in the name of Christ, are only the means of acquiring the Holy Spirit. It has been said that St. Seraphim summarizes the entire spiritual tradition of our Church in these words. For indeed, what is greater for us to possess than the Holy Spirit?

My prayer for the parishes in our Diocese, for all the faithful of our churches, is that, beginning anew with this Pentecost, we will focus our lives on acquiring the Holy Spirit and make the priority of our communities to imitate the marks of the Early Church -- to be faithful to our Tradition handed to us from the Apostles; to be steadfast in prayer, both private and liturgical; to be frequent in our reception of the Holy Mysteries, especially the Eucharist; and to permeate our parish lives with *koinonia* -- communion with one another in steadfast love. May the Lord help us to achieve these goals as we journey together to His Kingdom, guided by the Holy Spirit.

With love in Christ,

+ Michael

+ MICHAEL

+ Bishop of New York and the Diocese
of New York and New Jersey



PENTECOST – THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE APOSTLES

The tenth day after the Ascension of Jesus Christ was the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of Christ. It was the Jews' great feast of Pentecost, which commemorated the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai.

All the Apostles, the Mother of God, and the other disciples of Christ and other of the faithful, were all together in one room in Jerusalem. It was the third hour of the day by the Hebrew reckoning of hours, according to our system – nine o'clock in the morning. Suddenly a sound came from Heaven, like a rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. There descended on them tongues that looked like fire, which rested on each one of them. There were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, previously unknown to them. Thus the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of the Savior, descended on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire, as a sign that He gave the apostles the ability and zeal to preach the teachings of Christ to all peoples. He descended in the form of fire as a sign of the power to cleanse sins, to sanctify and warm souls.

On the occasion of the feast of Pentecost, there were in Jerusalem many Jews who had come from various nations. Hearing the noise, a great multitude of people came together around the house where the disciples of Christ were. They were all bewildered and asked each other, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? How are they able to tell in our languages the mighty works of God?" In disbelief they said, "Thy are filled with new wine." Then the Apostle Peter, standing with the eleven, said that they were not drunk, but that the Holy Spirit had descended upon them, that it has been prophesied by the Prophet Joel, and that Jesus Christ, Whom the Jews had crucified, had risen from the dead, ascended into Heaven and poured out on them the Holy Spirit. Finishing this sermon about Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter said, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, Whom you crucified."

The sermon of Peter so moved those who heard it that many more believed in Jesus Christ. They

asked Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; then you shall also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." So those who believed in Christ readily accepted baptism, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Thus began the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, the Church of Christ.

From the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit the Christian faith quickly spread with the help of God, and the number of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ multiplied. Instructed by the Holy Spirit, the apostles preached boldly to all about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, about His suffering for us and resurrection from the dead. The Lord helped them with many great miracles which were performed by the apostles in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. At first the apostles preached to the Jews, and then dispersed to various countries to preach to all the people. To perform the sacraments and to preach Christianity the apostles established, by the laying on of hands, bishops, presbyters, and deacons. This grace of the Holy Spirit, which was clearly conferred on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire, is now conferred in our Holy Orthodox Church invisibly in its sacraments, through the successors to the apostles, the pastors of the Church, its bishops and priests.



Troparion – tone 8

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit; through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of Man, glory to Thee!

Kontakion – tone 8

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity. Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the all-holy Spirit!

The Miracles of St. George—to Muslims!

St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Prescott, AZ

The saints love everyone, and help all. Even among Muslims, who don't even have saints, the knowledge that the Christian saint, the Greatmartyr George of Lydda, helps those who ask him, brings thousands to ask his aid and intercession. And he responds swiftly to help them. How much more will he aid and protect those fellow disciples of Jesus Christ who call upon him in faith, asking for his powerful intercession before God, and granting the gifts of healing and more through his prayers!

The Monastery of St. George Koudounas

This historic Monastery of Saint George Koudounas, on Prince's Island outside of Constantinople, was according to tradition built by the Byzantine Emperor Nikephoros Phokas in 963 AD. A miraculous icon of St. George was brought here from the Monastery of Peace, which was founded by Emperor Justin II, in Athens at that time.



The Monastery was later sacked in the Fourth Crusade. Then in 1302 the pirate Giustiniani plundered all the buildings and monasteries of the island. Not wanting their holy icon stolen by the Franks, the monks hid the icon under the earth and place the holy altar above it. The miraculous icon however was lost for many years.

Later, St. George appeared to a shepherd in a dream and told him where to find his icon. When he approached the area, he heard the ringing of bells, and having unearthed the icon, found it decorated with bells. This is the source behind the epithet "Koudouna" which means "bells".

The Monastery was later attached to Hagia Lavra in Kalavryta, and eventually to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The current church was built in 1905.



The miracles of the Saint are many, not only towards Christians [Romans], who approached always with great reverence (in olden times there wasn't a Christian family which had not visited Koudouna at least once a year), but towards everyone without exception, who approach his grace with faith. Thus there is a great mass of people who come from other faiths from throughout Turkey. The pilgrims number about 250,000 a year, the majority being muslim Turks.

The great iron gate of the Monastery, as we learn from its engraving in Greek and Turkish, was offered from the Muslim Rasoul Efenti, as a gift of gratitude towards the Saint for the healing of his wife.

On April 23rd, in other words the day when the Saint is honored and the Monastery celebrates, tens of thousands of pilgrims arrive, not only from Constantinople but from other cities, to venerate the Great Martyr and to seek help in their problems.

Roughly all of these pilgrims are from other faiths.

Many will return later to thank St. George, who heard their prayer and granted their desire, bringing the indispensable oil for his vigil lamp. You hear with passion how he healed this person's son, how another became a mother after being barren for many years, how a third acquired a house, etc.

The Monastery also celebrates on the feast of Saint Thekla, and on this feast about 10,000 Muslims visit the Monastery seeking the prayer of Saint George.

Muslim Vows

Some come barefoot up the hill which takes about 30 minutes to climb to the Monastery, others come with offerings of oil, candles, and sugar so that their lives may be sweet. Some do not speak as they climb up to the Monastery until they kiss the icon of St. George. They follow the services with hands lifted in the air holding lit candles. They ask priests for antidron to bring home with them for a blessing. They have great faith and respect for Orthodoxy.

On September 24 I witnessed at 6:00 AM four modern looking Turkish girls approaching the Monastery. I asked them for what purpose they came. They responded: "Faith in the Saint brought us here. It doesn't matter that we are Muslims. We prayed that he would help us. We have heard so much about the Monastery."

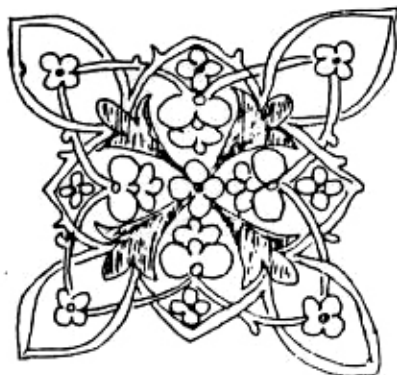
Oral came from Smyrna in order to venerate the Saint with her vow. She brought three bottles of oil. When I asked why she, as a Muslim woman among the thousands, visit the Orthodox Monastery, she responded: "It is not forbidden by anyone for us to believe in Saint George. Religions have one common agreement, the one and only God. We could be hiding within us a christian."

Of the many interviews I conducted that day with Muslims, the responses were basically the same.

A different answer was given by Antil however. He said: "Life in Turkey is difficult. The people need something to give them strength. They have turned to religion. They have been bored by everything so they seek help elsewhere. Why not Saint George?"

And one Turkish newspaper reported: "Saint George has distributed hope to the suffering."

Testimonies of Monks From the Monastery



Hieromonk Ephraim of Xenophontos, who has lived for three years at "Koudouna", is astonished with the faith of the thousands of Muslims who visit the monastery. "These people live with their heart", he affirms, "Because faith is the sight and the strength of the heart, for this reason they can and they do experience our Saints."

Monk Kallinikos of Xenophontos, who serves as a priest, relates: "We are astonished with that which occurs here. Many times we see people who find the Lord with the faith of the Roman centurion." To our



question if the Saint responds to the supplications of the thousands of pilgrims, he replied: “During my three years here, we ourselves are witnesses of miracles, such as the healing of paralytics, mutes, and the giving birth to children.”



We asked the monks at St. George to comment about their stay in Turkey, and they told us: “All of their behavior is perfect. From the highest ruler, to the lowest, they treat us with such respect that many times we wonder which would be better, to live in Christian Greece or Muslim Turkey. We should tell you that we go everywhere with the monastic dress and our experiences have always been positive.

Thus, St. George has become a place of worship for thousands of atheists, Christians, Jews, and especially Muslims, who with every means come to the island and bring their tamata (vows), and place them before the Saint, as they place their hopes in him. And the Saint shows that he does not judge and ‘imparts healing’ to every faithful person.”

Miracles

The Sick Turkish Woman

A Turkish woman from Levkochori had a serious health problem. She had heard a lot about St. George and wanted to come [venerate], but they did not let her come into the church because she was Turkish. But this didn't deter her from remaining outside the church the whole night. In the morning they gave her holy oil from the vigil lamp of the Saint and she became well. After this, her husband gave many gifts to the church.

St. George Saves a Young Muslim Girl

A Muslim woman with her mother were taking a taxi for a long trip. The Muslims, as is well known, respect St. George very much.

On the road the taxi driver abandoned the proper course and began to show a threatening attitude towards the girl—the women apparently were praying—and at some point the taxi driver stopped the car and attempted to rape the girl. Immediately a police officer on horseback appeared, who ordered the taxi driver in a very powerful manner to the nearest police station. He went full of fear with the policeman, and the policeman on horseback went with him to the station, and issued a complaint for attempted rape. He signed

the police book and left. When the taxi driver later came out of the interrogation, they looked in the book and said to him:

“There is no hope for you to escape! Do you know who brought you here?” Saint George!

Note: These and similar miracles and sentiments do not at all vindicate the false religion of Islam, nor the terrible actions of some Turks against Christians, but the faith and love of some simple Muslims towards Christ and His Saints. Similarly, Christ found in the Roman Centurion greater faith than any in Israel (Matthew 8:10). And often, this presence of the Holy Spirit out of love not only acts to heal the bodies of non-Orthodox, but more crucially the souls, as many later embrace the light and are baptized Orthodox. May Christ grant us all repentance, that we all may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth. St. George the Trophy-bearer, intercede for us all and help us! Amen.

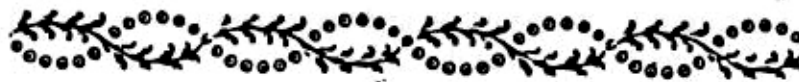
Why Do Muslims Venerate Saint George? According to Archimandrite Damianos, overseer of the Holy Sepulchre, there are three reasons:

- His green garments, which for Muslims represents “life” and for which reason they call him “the Green One,”
- Because many Muslims hear about and experience his miracles,
- Because as a Trophy-bearer with a cape and sword he inspires a certain amount of fear and respect.

It is because of the great respect for St. George that none of the Orthodox churches dedicated to him in Turkey have been demolished, as well as churches dedicated to the Theotokos who also is greatly respected by Muslims.

Read this article on the [St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Prescott, AZ website](#) (new window will open).

Published: April 25, 2010



DISMISSAL HYMN, FOURTH TONE

Liberator of captives, defender of the poor, physician of the sick and champion of kings, O trophy-bearer, Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

KONTAKION, FOURTH TONE

Cultivated by God, thou hast proved a most honoured cultivator* of piety, and thou hast gathered for thyself sheaves of virtues; for having sown in tears, thou reapest in joy, and having suffered with blood, thou hast received Christ. And by thine intercessions, O Saint George, thou grantest unto all forgiveness of sins.